

Comments from *JABA* Readers

ACTIVITIES OF THE BALANCE SIG

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Many, if not all, behavior analysts have experienced frustration at finding that our field is misrepresented in academic and popular sources. The BALANCE special interest group (SIG) was organized to provide corrective feedback for misrepresentations and reinforcement for accurate representation of behavior analysis. The SIG attempts to monitor representations of behavior analysis in all forms of media. Interested persons should write Roger F. Bass, editor, 3978 Hwy LL, Port Washington, Wisconsin 53074 (E-mail: RFB53074@AOL.COM) and request a copy of the initial newsletter, which includes a history of the SIG, with aims and goals by W. Joseph Wyatt. "A letter a year" continues to be a primary goal of the SIG. The letters are written to authors, editors, publishers, and other sources primarily in response to misrepresentations of behavior analysis or to reinforce accurate presentations of behavior analysis.

For example, the 13th edition of Zimbar-

do's (1992) general psychology textbook included a section on "insight learning" and suggested that a behavioral approach could not account for the findings. However the accompanying photographs were of Epstein and Skinner's pigeons during their behavioral "insight learning" experiments! Joe Wyatt wrote Zimbardo pointing out this faux pas and suggested corrections. Zimbardo wrote a return letter thanking him for the information and hinted that he may drop the entire section in the next edition. (At this time the contents of the 14th edition are not known; Wyatt, 1996, personal communication.)

Similarly, Gary Hughes (1996) took Todd and Morris' (1983) suggestion that an "effective approach to the problem of errors in textbooks probably is to write to the authors of textbooks and to their publishers, explaining why certain passages are in error and offering suggestions for improvement" (p. 158). Hughes wrote to the authors of 10 general psychology textbooks and provided in-depth evaluations of their treatment of behaviorism and behavioral approaches. Four of seven authors who responded agreed that passages were in error and that they planned to revise them. "In other words, there is hope!" (Hughes, p. 4). Other members have responded effectively to misrepresentations of behavior analysis in other media sources.

BALANCE is devoted to the accurate representation of behavior analysis in academic and popular sources. Activities of the special interest group include a meeting, symposia, and an expo poster at each year's ABA meeting. Members receive a newsletter published twice yearly by Roger F. Bass, Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin 53140. Voluntary dues are \$2.00 per year, and are payable at the business meeting of the group during the ABA convention.

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At the annual ABA conference, in addition to the business meeting, BALANCE sponsors at least one session and has a display at the expo. Much of BALANCE's mission has been complemented by the BEHAV-AN E-mail news group, run by Joe Plaud. News group members regularly report misrepresentations of behavior analysis by posting an account of the misrepresentation. Typically there is a flurry of exchanges concerning the posting, including suggested replies and names, sources, and addresses. (See *JABA*, 1996, p. 506, for more information on BEHAV-AN.)

Roger Bass is currently in the process of developing a web site for BALANCE. When completed, the site should contain *BALANCE Newsletter* articles on line, information regarding membership, clarifications of

some common misrepresentations of behavior analysis, an annotated bibliography containing the "best" and "worst" representations of behavior analysis, and other information relevant to the BALANCE mission.

REFERENCES

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- Todd, J. T., & Morris, E. K. (1983). Misconception and miseducation: Presentations of radical behaviorism in psychology textbooks. *The Behavior Analyst*, 6, 153-160.
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